United Nations DP/2000/14

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
21 March 2000

Original: English

Second regular session 2000
3-7 April 2000, New York
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
UNDP

Business plans

"Sharing new ground in post-conflict situations: The role of UNDP in support of reintegration programmes"

Note by the Administrator

1. The Administrator wishes to bring to the attention of the Executive Board that the evaluation entitled "Sharing new ground in post-conflict situations: The role of UNDP in support of reintegration programmes" has been made available to members of the Board in the language of submission (English). The evaluation will be published in the three working languages of the Board: English, French and Spanish.

2. Pending the availability of the evaluation in the three working languages and in order to facilitate discussion at the current session, the executive summary, contained in the annex to the present document, has been translated into the six official languages.

3. The Director of the Evaluation Office will introduce the evaluation and provide an overview of the findings and recommendations.

00-35227 (E) 230300

Annex

Sharing new ground in post-conflict situations: the role of UNDP in support of reintegration programmes

Executive summary

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken the present strategic evaluation to take stock of its experience in complex emergency situations and extract insights to improve the organization's capacity to respond. The terms of reference for the exercise identified the reintegration of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants as the principal area of focus. The evaluation team was asked to review the adequacy of UNDP interventions and assess the quality of its response to reintegration programmes in terms of being proactive or event/donor driven, staffing, and ability to form effective partnerships.

Starting in December 1998, members of the team of seven experts visited 15 UNDP programme countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia, Mozambique, Philippines, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Tajikistan).

It is hoped that the present report will play a useful role in the dialogue on substantive and institutional reform. It focuses on the issue of the work of UNDP in reintegration programmes and more broadly on the role UNDP could play based on its comparative strengths in post-conflict situations.

Findings

UNDP interventions in support of the reintegration of war-affected populations fall into three main categories:

- Area-based economic and social assistance for the recovery of war-affected communities;
- Reintegration support for specific target groups, such as ex-combatants, internally displaced persons or returnees; and
- Technical assistance and capacity-building for key institutions in the peace-building and recovery process.

The evaluation team found many instances of successful programming by UNDP in these various areas. It noted in particular the important role that area-based programmes have played in recovery and the significant technical assistance UNDP has provided to national demining efforts.

Adequacy of UNDP interventions

For humanitarian and financial reasons (donors being drawn to high-profile emergency situations), UNDP found it could not stay on the sidelines even during the humanitarian phase of post-conflict assistance. The team agreed that development concerns should be raised, and that therefore UNDP should be involved, at all stages in conflict and post-conflict situations. In these situations, however, the team found that the processes UNDP traditionally followed hampered its ability to act and had not yet been tailored to the constraints and fast-paced requirements of a post-conflict situation.

Quality of UNDP interventions

In the earlier years, UNDP country offices found themselves unprepared when pushed towards post-conflict situations by donors and pulled towards reintegration activities by the organization's broadening understanding of its mandate. As such, they found themselves ill-equipped for the task at hand. Their meagre staff lacked experience within the context. Many of their activities were being driven by donors' timelines and requests and not by the organization's own framework for responses and policies or by national priorities, neither of which was clear if it existed at all. Above all, however, the team found that the most pressing constraints faced by these country offices were bottlenecks at headquarters owing

to slow or insufficient support or, alternatively, to guidelines and procedures, especially in procurement and staffing, that were too restrictive or unrealistic.

Response from headquarters

While the country offices were focusing their programme energies, headquarters made a number of significant organizational and policy adjustments to respond better to the situation in the field. Reforms at headquarters included establishing the Emergency Response Division (ERD), creating the Crisis Committee, setting aside funds for countries in special situations (target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) line 1.1.3) and drawing up specific guidelines for the staffing of offices in post-conflict countries. Nevertheless, the evaluation team found that more improvements are needed in: (a) resource mobilization, with a re-examination of the Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal (CAP) and the expanded CAP (ECAP) processes; (b) availability and examination of appropriate execution modalities, including the use of the United Nations Office for Project Services and non-governmental organizations; and (c) attention to gender issues. The two main factors hampering headquarters backstopping efforts, however, are a lack of consensus with regard to the appropriate role of UNDP in complex emergencies and the appropriate positioning of an emergency response division with respect to that role.

Major recommendations

Policy

UNDP should recognize post-conflict assistance as a major part of its mission and mandate. UNDP should formulate and distribute an overall policy statement on its role in this area and more specifically in reintegration programmes.

UNDP should reassess the level of funding it has earmarked for use in special development situations.

UNDP headquarters should (a) redefine the role of ERD, turning it into a strong technical resource unit, and (b) clarify the field backstopping responsibilities of the regional bureaux and ERD.

Programme

Given its mandate for sustainable human development, UNDP should concentrate its support to the reintegration of war-affected populations on restoring social and human capital.

UNDP can best address the reintegration needs of war-affected populations (IDPs, returnees, ex-combatants) through area-based approaches at the community level and not at the target-group level. Some targeted opportunities (training, credit, and access to resources) for these groups may be appropriate only in the short term.

UNDP needs to devise an institutional strategy to ensure greater use of NGOs and United Nations Volunteers during post-conflict situations.

UNDP needs to assign staff to country offices early on in complex emergencies to assist its partners in infusing a development perspective into humanitarian assistance strategies and activities.

Coordination

UNDP country offices should develop special resource mobilization strategies for use during post-conflict periods.

UNDP and the World Bank need to agree on their respective development roles and comparative strengths in these situations and reinforce complementarity between the two organizations.

UNDP needs to step up to the challenge of serving as the manager of technical-level joint programming units.